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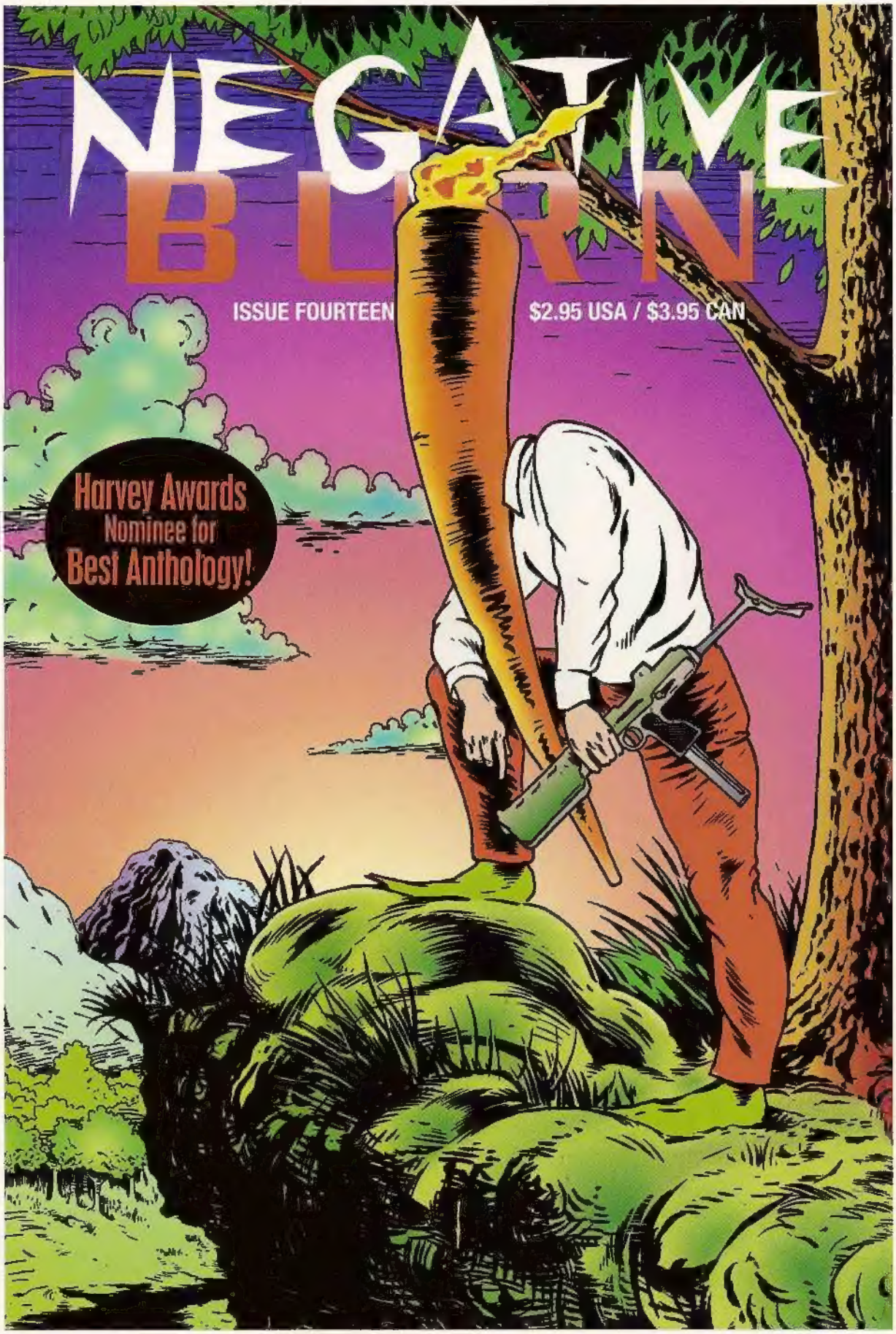

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illustrated by Doug Wildey, Greg DiGenti, and Doug Gray

THE CIRCLE GAME ..... Page 34
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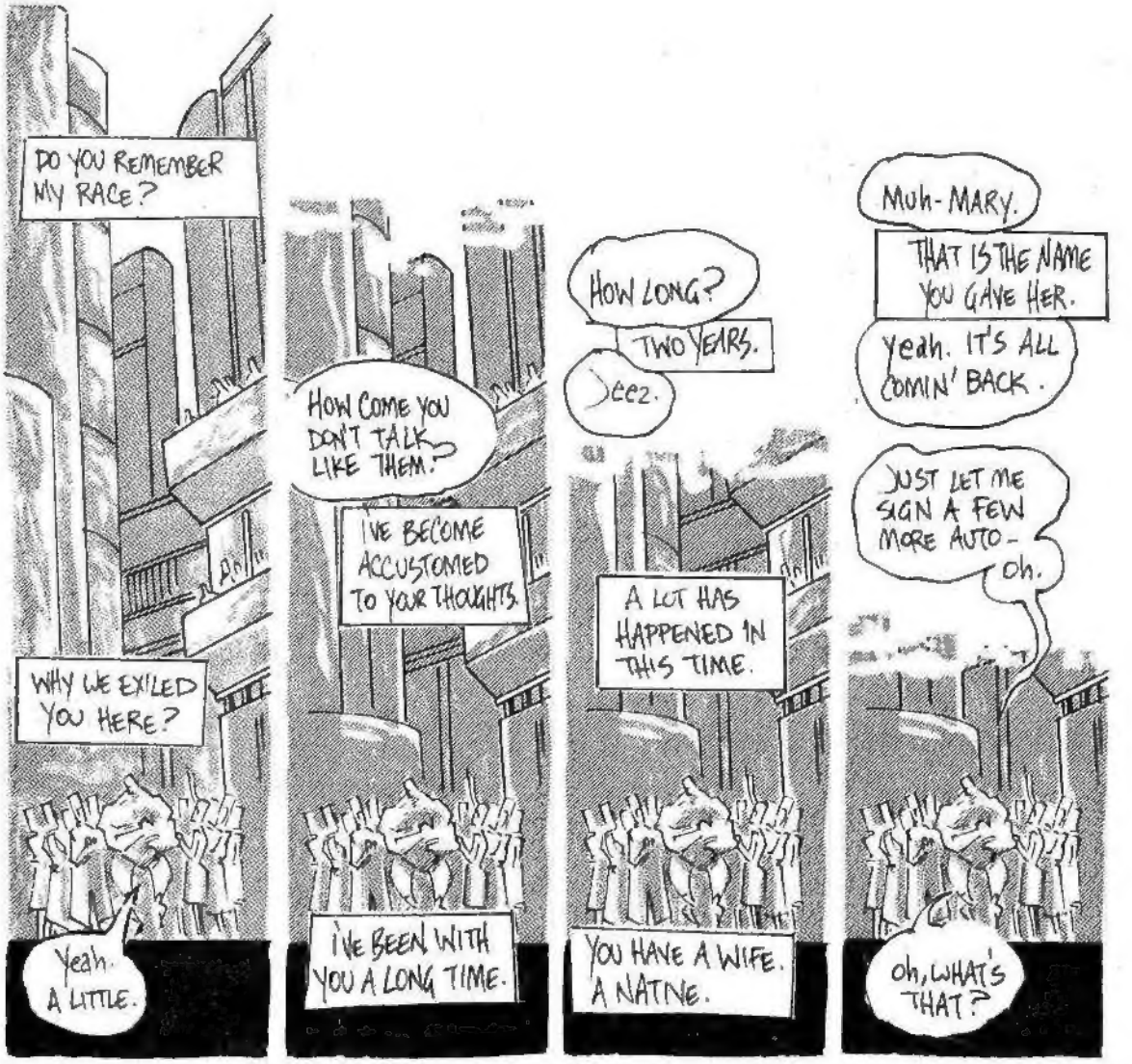
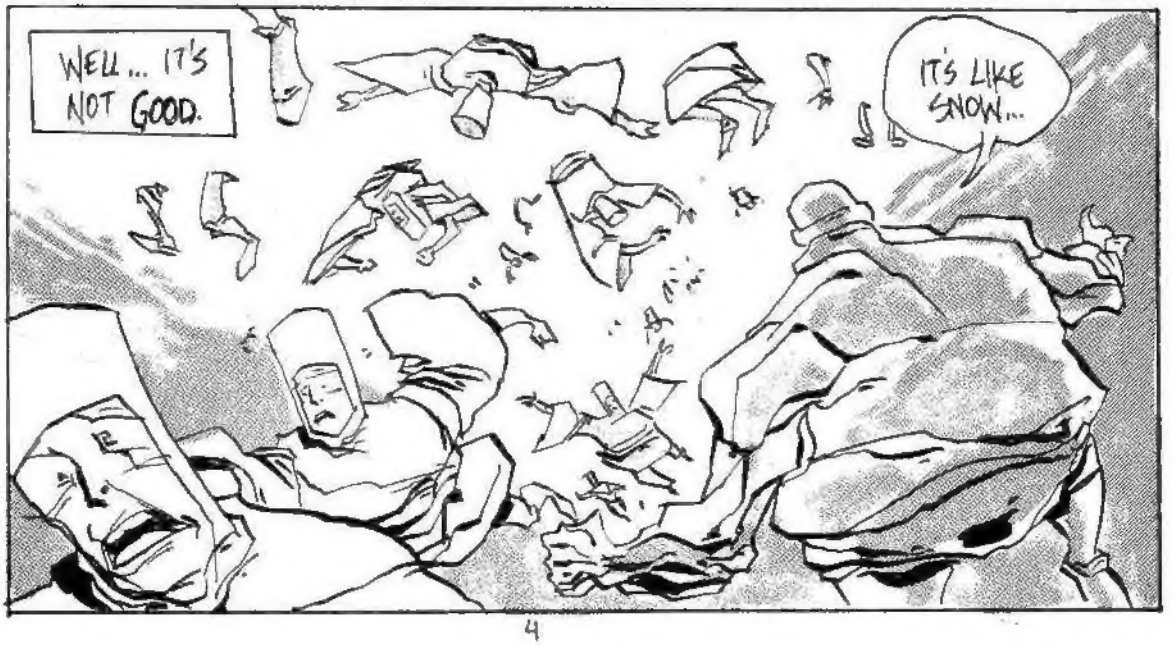
BONESHAKER PART IV - PHILLIP HESTER

KLAP
KLAP
KLAP

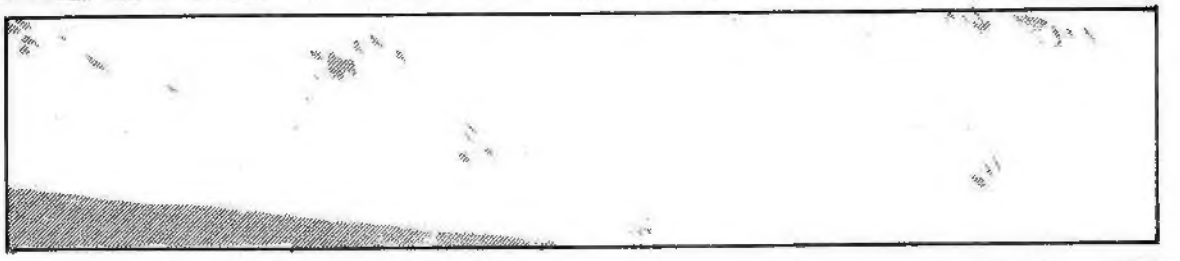
WHA-
WHA'S HAPPENIN'?
TAKE A BOW.
KLAP KLAP KLAP KLAP KLAP KLAP KLAP KLAP KLAP KLAP
THEY'RE CLAPPING FOR YOU. TAKE A BOW.
FOR ME?
-Ah- YOU'VE COLLAPSED DURING ONE OF YOUR PERFORMANCES AGAIN.
MY PERF-?
YES, THIS HAS HAPPENED BEFORE. YOU'RE ON THE PLANET OF EXILE.
YOU'RE A POPULAR SINGER AMONG THIS PLANET'S INDIGENOUS POPULATION.
A SINGER? WOW.
KLAP KLAP KLAP KLAP KLAP KLAP KLAP KLAP KLAP KLAP
YES, OFTEN AT THE PEAK OF YOUR SHOW YOU COLLAPSE. THERE IS USUALLY SOME MEMORY LOSS.
Oh.
TAKE YOUR BOW. A SECURITY TEAM WILL ESCORT YOU OFFSTAGE

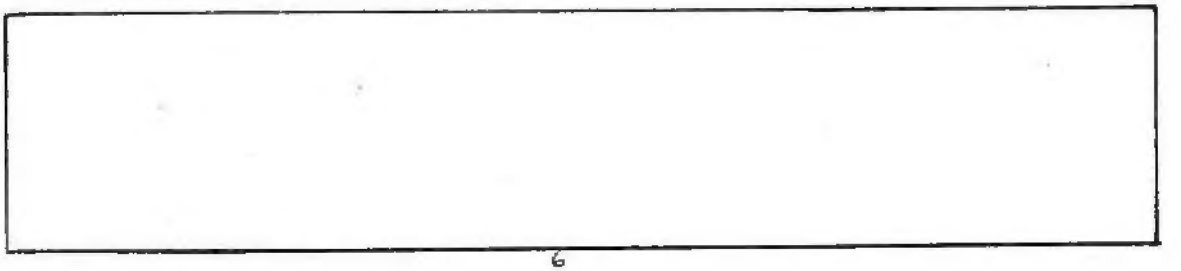
SECURITY? I'M THAT POPULAR, EH?
YES.
SO... HOW COME NO ONES CHEERIN'?
BECAUSE THEY CAN'T.
NO ONE HERE CAN.
THE POPULATION OF THIS PLANET RESERVES VOCAL COMMUNICATION FOR RELIGIOUS CHANTS AND MATING RITUALS.
HENCE, YOUR DEEP VOICE EVOKES SAVAGE EROTICISM AND ALMOST SACRED ADMIRATION IN YOUR AUDIENCE.
WOW.
YOU ARE THE BIGGEST, RICHEST, MOST LOVED CELEBRITY ON THIS PLANET, AS YOU CAN TELL BY THIS THRONG OF FANS.
FANS.
NEVER THOUGHT I'D HAVE FANS AGAIN.
HEY, Y'KNOW...
SOME OF THESE ALIEN CHICKS HAVE NICE TITS.
SO YOU'VE SAID.

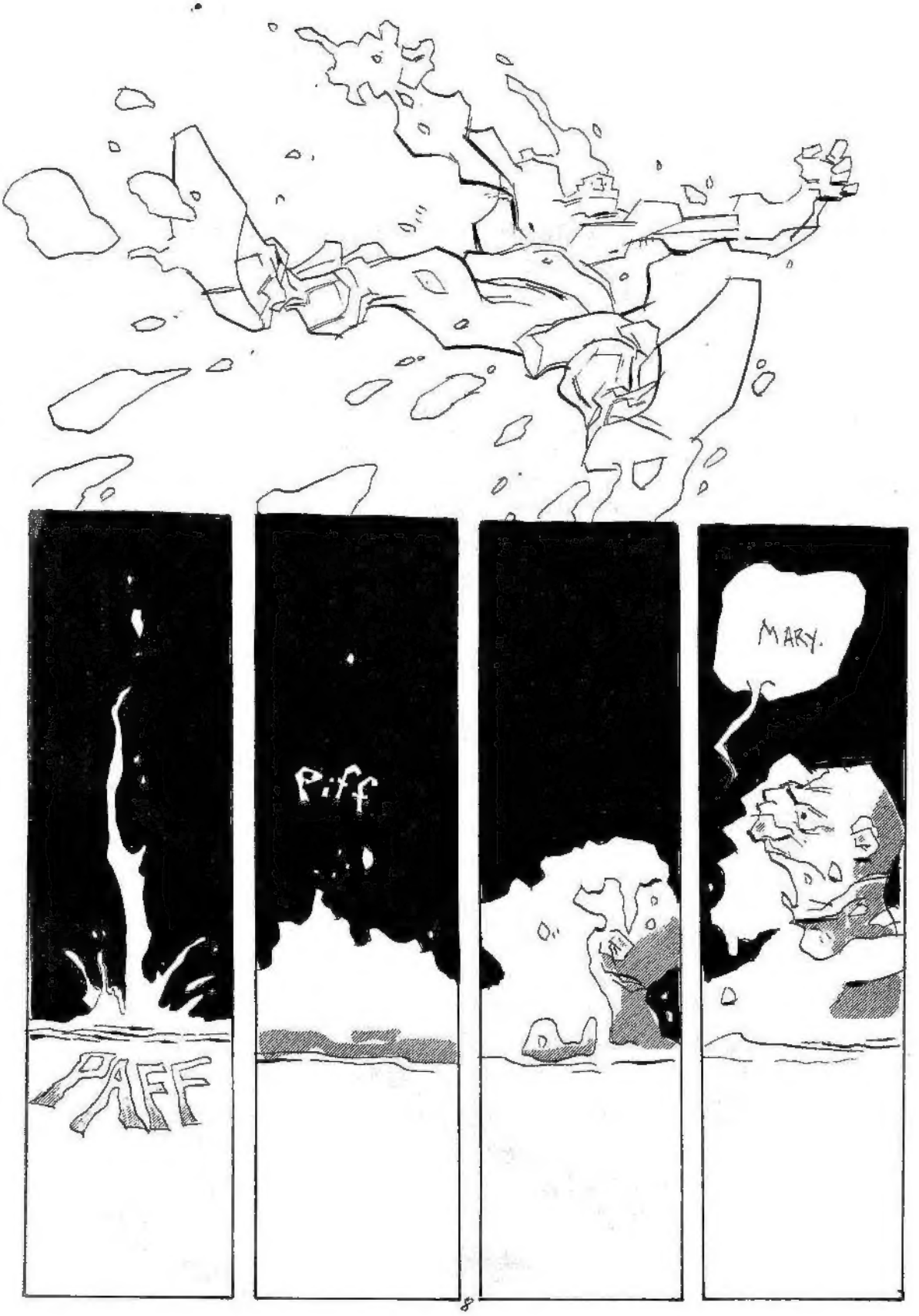

DO YOU REMEMBER MY RACE?
WHY WE EXILED YOU HERE?
Yeah. A LITTLE.
HOW COME YOU DON'T TALK LIKE THEM.
I'VE BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO YOUR THOUGHTS.
I'VE BEEN WITH YOU A LONG TIME.
HOW LONG?
TWO YEARS.
Jeez.
A LOT HAS HAPPENED IN THIS TIME.
YOU HAVE A WIFE. A NATIVE.
Muh-MARY.
THAT IS THE NAME YOU GAVE HER.
Yeah. IT'S ALL COMIN' BACK.
JUST LET ME SIGN A FEW MORE AUTO-
Oh.
Oh, WHAT'S THAT?


WELL... IT'S NOT GOOD.
IT'S LIKE SNOW...

...EXCEPT IT'S SWALLOWING PEOPLE.
WAIT A MINUTE! THAT- THAT'S MARY!
BONESHAKER, YOU ARE STILL CONFUSED, THAT IS NOT YOUR WIFE.
NO! I REMEMBER NOW!
MARY, HOLD ON!
BONESHAKER...
HOLD ON!
...IT'S NOT HER.
MARY!






PAFF
Piff
MARY.

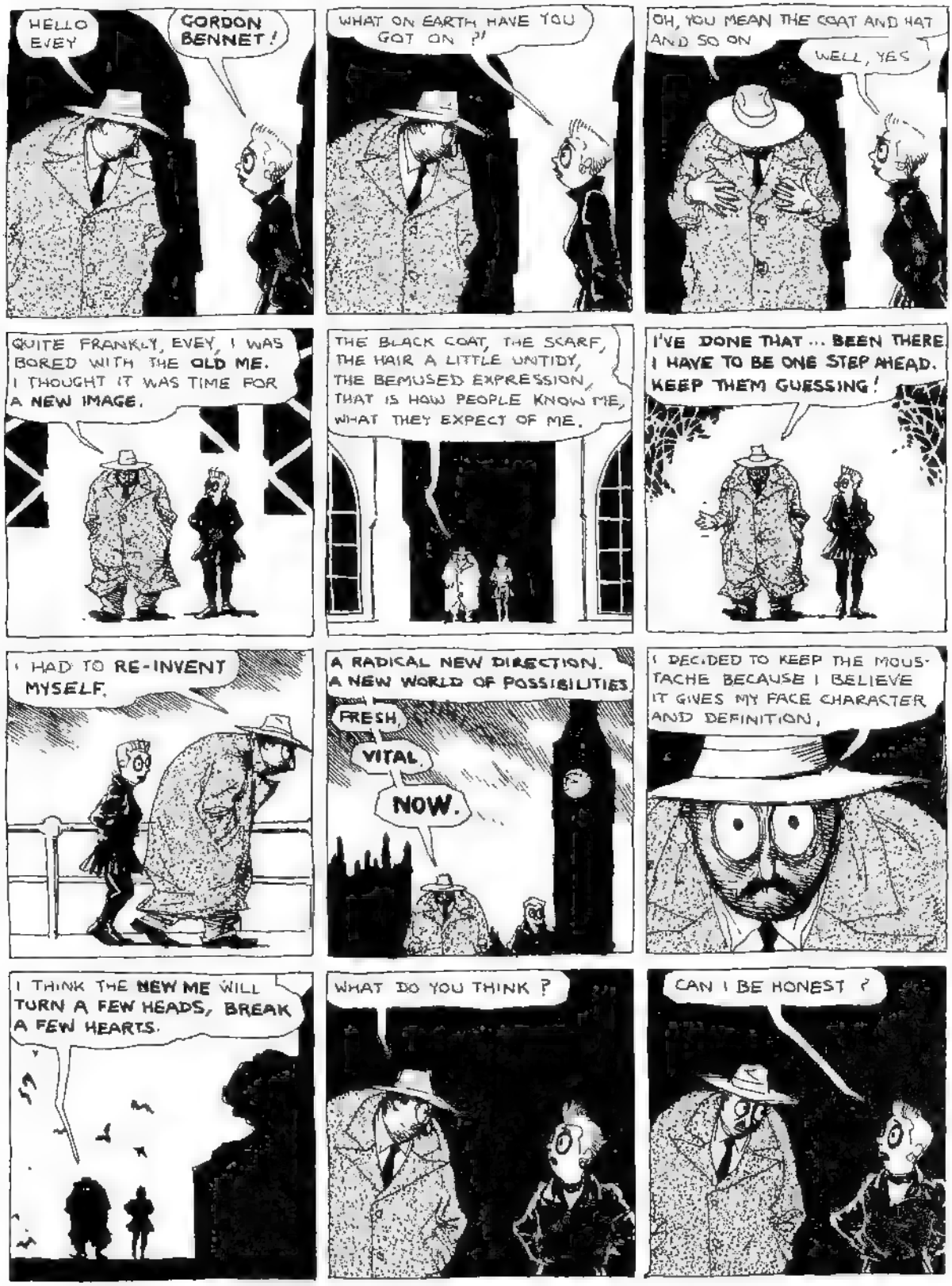
YOU REMEMBER NOW?
YES! YES! EVERYTHING! OH.
OH, MARY. HANG ON.
SHE IS DEAD.
THEY ARE ALL DEAD. BURIED.
NO. OH, NO.
ONLY HE COULD'VE DONE THIS.
WHO, GODAMMIT? WHO KILLED 'EM?
ONE OF US. ONE OF OUR CONTINUUM.
THE ONE WHO SET HIMSELF APART.
THE ONE WE ASKED YOU TO DESTROY.

Yehh..
Yehh...
YOU.
YOU
BASTARD!
NEXT: IT ENDS.

MR. MAMOULIAN

BREAK A FEW HEARTS

17 BOLAND 29.1 '87


HELLO EVEY
GORDON BENNET!
WHAT ON EARTH HAVE YOU GOT ON ?!
OH, YOU MEAN THE COAT AND HAT AND SO ON
WELL, YES
QUITE FRANKLY, EVEY, I WAS BORED WITH THE OLD ME. I THOUGHT IT WAS TIME FOR A NEW IMAGE.
THE BLACK COAT, THE SCARF, THE HAIR A LITTLE UNTIDY, THE BEMUSED EXPRESSION, THAT IS HOW PEOPLE KNOW ME, WHAT THEY EXPECT OF ME.
I'VE DONE THAT ... BEEN THERE. I HAVE TO BE ONE STEP AHEAD. KEEP THEM GUESSING!
I HAD TO RE-INVENT MYSELF.
A RADICAL NEW DIRECTION. A NEW WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES.
FRESH.
VITAL.
NOW.
I DECIDED TO KEEP THE MOUSTACHE BECAUSE I BELIEVE IT GIVES MY FACE CHARACTER AND DEFINITION.
I THINK THE NEW ME WILL TURN A FEW HEADS, BREAK A FEW HEARTS.
WHAT DO YOU THINK ?
CAN I BE HONEST ?

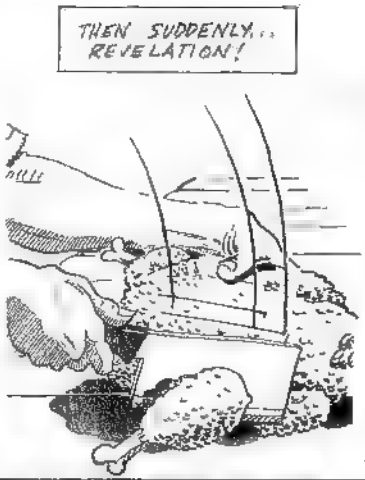
"the CHICKEN THAT KNEW, LIKE, EVERYTHING"
·script· MICHAEL B. MOE · DAVID J. VERRONI ·art·
QUIK CHIK
AH... HERE WE GO.
OH...
THERE YOU ARE. BEEN EXPECTING YOU THEY TOLD ME TO
NAME'S WAHL, BY THE WAY.
OBADIAH THEOPHILUS WAHL. BUT YOU CAN CALL ME O.T.
CARE TO PARTAKE? STILL PRETTY GOOD-
JUST WATCH THE MOLDY BITS.
NO-? SUIT YOURSELF
MMMM... TASTY.
PUTS ME IN MIND OF THE TIME I MET THE CHICKEN THAT KNEW, LIKE, EVERYTHING.
WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT?
KITCH

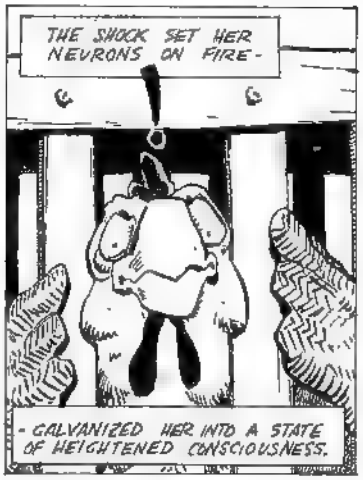
AHHH.. DUMB WAY TO START 'COURSE THERE WAS THIS CHICKEN. THERE'VE ALWAYS BEEN CHICKENS. ALWAYS WILL BE, FOR THAT MATTER. WHAT I MEAN IS-
NOT TOUGH.
SEEMS THERE WAS THIS CHICKEN
THIS WAS, LIKE, THE WORLD'S SMARTEST CHICKEN- A REGULAR ALBERT EINSTEIN- OR MAYBE MORE LIKE A MADAME CURIE
SHE WAS, AFTER ALL, A FEMALE
HER NAME WAS SUZY, AND SHE CAME INTO THE WORLD IN THE USUAL WAY-
-FOR A CHICKEN THAT IS.
BUT EVEN FROM THAT EARLY AGE, SHE WAS PRECOCIOUS-
WITH A CERTAIN INDEFINABLE... SOMETHING. FIRST SIGN THAT HERE WAS A BIRD TO BE RECKONED WITH
SHE HAD IT ALL- WARM ENVIRONMENT, PLENTY OF COMPANIONSHIP ALL THE FOOD SHE COULD EAT- HEAVEN ON EARTH FOR A YOUNG CHICKEN
BUT STILL SHE YEARNED FOR SOMETHING MORE.
AND THEN ONE DAY..

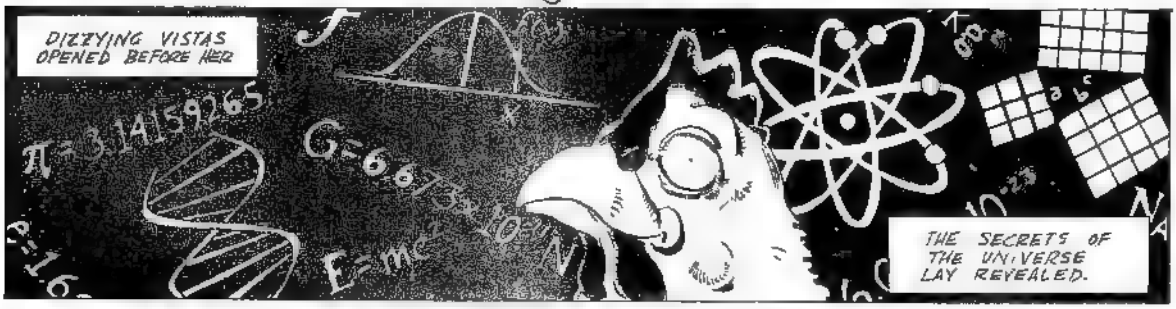
FACED WITH THE UNKNOWN, SUZY PONDERED HER FATE

WHERE WAS SHE BEING TAKEN? WHAT WAS TO BECOME OF HER?
SHE MUST FIND THE ANSWERS -AND SOON.

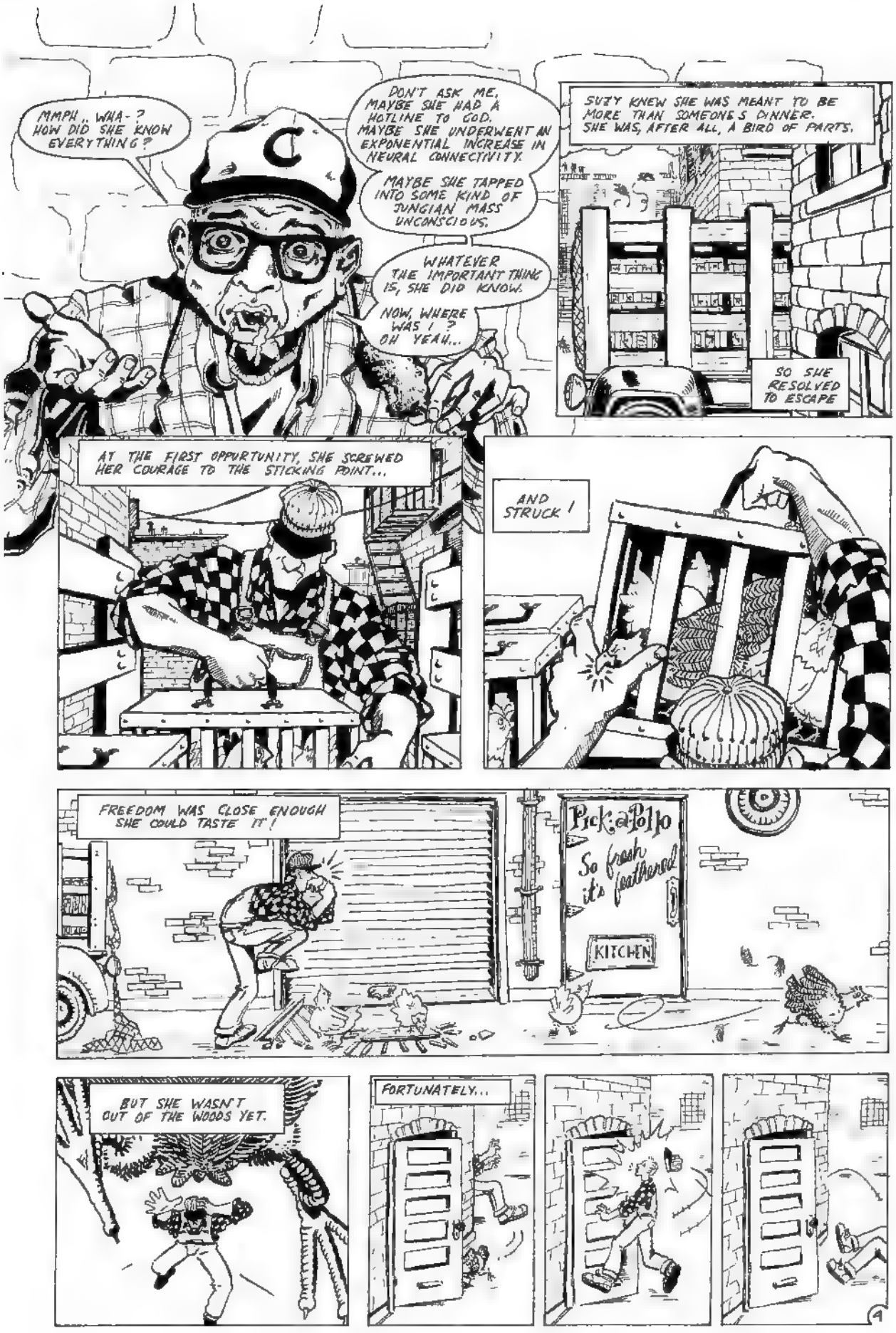
TIME WAS AGAINST HER. SHE FELT SHE WAS RUSHING TOWARD SOME RENDEZVOUS WITH ULTIMATE DESTINY.


THEN SUDDENLY... REVELATION!

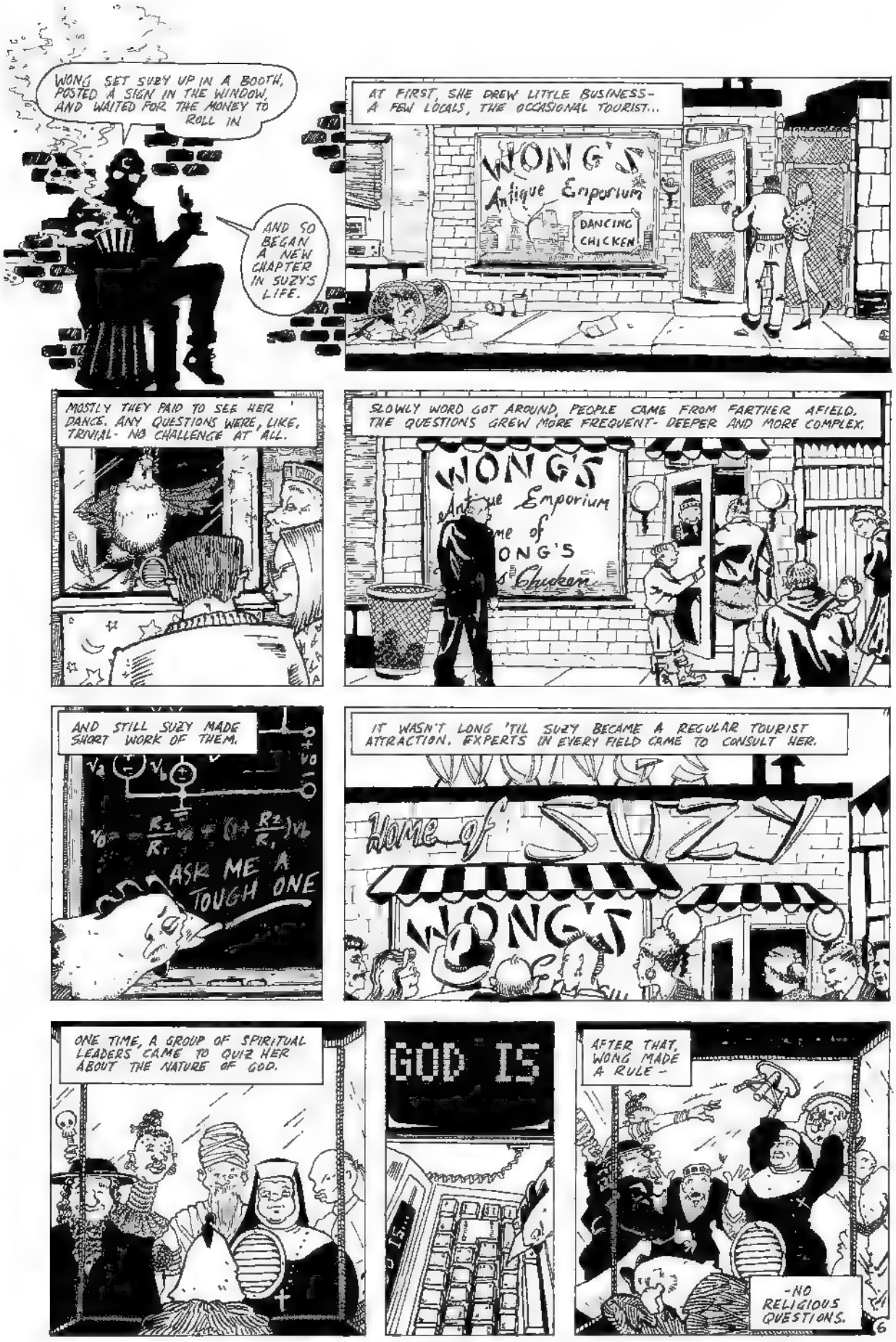

THE SHOCK SET HER NEURONS ON FIRE-
-GALVANIZED HER INTO A STATE OF HEIGHTENED CONSCIOUSNESS.


DIZZYING VISTAS OPENED BEFORE HER
π = 3.14159265
G=6.673×10⁻¹¹N
E=mc²
THE SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE LAY REVEALED.

INSTANTLY, SHE KNEW, LIKE, EVERYTHING--- -AND I DO MEAN EVERYTHING
303
383
BUT WOULD THAT BE ENOUGH TO SAVE HER?


MMPH.. WHA-? HOW DID SHE KNOW EVERYTHING?
DON'T ASK ME, MAYBE SHE HAD A HOTLINE TO GOD. MAYBE SHE UNDERWENT AN EXPONENTIAL INCREASE IN NEURAL CONNECTIVITY.
MAYBE SHE TAPPED INTO SOME KIND OF JUNGIAN MASS UNCONSCIOUS.
WHATEVER THE IMPORTANT THING IS, SHE DID KNOW.
NOW, WHERE WAS I? OH YEAH...
SUZY KNEW SHE WAS MEANT TO BE MORE THAN SOMEONE'S DINNER. SHE WAS, AFTER ALL, A BIRD OF PARTS.
SO SHE RESOLVED TO ESCAPE
AT THE FIRST OPPURTUNITY, SHE SCREWED HER COURAGE TO THE STICKING POINT...
AND STRUCK!
FREEDOM WAS CLOSE ENOUGH SHE COULD TASTE IT!
Pick-a-Pollo
So fresh it's feathered
KITCHEN
BUT SHE WASN'T OUT OF THE WOODS YET.
FORTUNATELY...
4

TURNZH OUT SHE'D SHTUMBLED... GLLP... STUMBLED INTO AN ANTIQUE SHOP. THE OWNER - AN OLD CHINAMAN NAMED WONG - LEFT THE BACK DOOR OPEN TO SAVE ON AIR CONDITIONING.
FORTUNATELY FOR SUZY AMONG THE RELICS INSIDE WAS AN ANCIENT TYPEWRITER.
RECOGNIZING SALVATION...
...SHE PECKED FRANTICALLY...
..AND FINISHED NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON.
WONG KNEW RIGHT AWAY HE WAS ONTO SOMETHING BIG
no kill i
HE DETERMINED TO HAVE THIS BIRD FOR HIS VERY OWN.
BEST MONEY HE EVER SPENT. NOT ONLY WAS SUZY, LIKE, AN UNPARALLELED GENIUS...
SHE WAS ALSO AN INCREDIBLE DANCER. A REGULAR FRED ASTAIRE-
-OR MAYBE MORE LIKE A GINGER ROGERS.


WONG SET SUZY UP IN A BOOTH, POSTED A SIGN IN THE WINDOW, AND WAITED FOR THE MONEY TO ROLL IN
AND SO BEGAN A NEW CHAPTER IN SUZY'S LIFE.
AT FIRST, SHE DREW LITTLE BUSINESS- A FEW LOCALS, THE OCCASIONAL TOURIST...
WONG'S Antique Emporium
DANCING CHICKEN
MOSTLY THEY PAID TO SEE HER DANCE. ANY QUESTIONS WERE, LIKE, TRIVIAL- NO CHALLENGE AT ALL.
SLOWLY WORD GOT AROUND, PEOPLE CAME FROM FARTHER AFIELD. THE QUESTIONS GREW MORE FREQUENT- DEEPER AND MORE COMPLEX.
AND STILL SUZY MADE SHORT WORK OF THEM.
ASK ME A TOUGH ONE
IT WASN'T LONG 'TIL SUZY BECAME A REGULAR TOURIST ATTRACTION. EXPERTS IN EVERY FIELD CAME TO CONSULT HER.
Home of SUZY
WONG'S
ONE TIME, A GROUP OF SPIRITUAL LEADERS CAME TO QUIZ HER ABOUT THE NATURE OF GOD.
GOD IS
AFTER THAT, WONG MADE A RULE -
-NO RELIGIOUS QUESTIONS.

ALL IN ALL, THOUGH, THINGS WENT PRETTY WELL.
ANOTHER TIME, A RUSSIAN ECONOMIST ASKED HER HOW TO SAVE THE SOVIET ECONOMY HE ONLY FOLLOWED PART OF SUZY'S PLAN...
...AND WE ALL KNOW HOW THAT TURNED OUT.
HER MASTER WAS MAKING OUT LIKE A BANDIT---
THEN CAME THE DAY SUZY MADE A STARTLING REVELATION..
---WHILE SHE ON THE OTHER HAND WAS MAKING--
---WELL, CHICKEN FEED.
HAD SHE MERELY TRADED ONE CAGE FOR ANOTHER? WAS SOMEONE ELSE TO REAP THE REWARDS OF HER HARD WORK?
NO! SHE DESERVED BETTER. FOR A BIRD OF HER PLUCK AND WIT, THE SKY WAS THE LIMIT.
THIS TIME, SHE FORGED A MORE DELIBERATE PLAN OF ESCAPE. NIGHT AFTER NIGHT WAS SPENT NIBBLING AWAY AT A PIECE OF CHALK.
WHEN IT WAS FINALLY HONED THIN ENOUGH...
AND THE NEXT MORNING...

WHO CAN SAY WHAT THOUGHTS RAN THROUGH HER HEAD AS SHE ROAMED THE CITY, REVELING IN HER NEW-FOUND FREEDOM?
DID SHE DREAM OF A BRIGHTER FUTURE AS A DISTINGUISHED SCIENTIST? CZAR OF FINANCE? WORLD LEADER? MAYBE EVEN...
...GODDESS?
SURELY NONE OF THESE WERE BEYOND HER.
WHO KNOWS? MAYBE SHE EVEN HIT UPON THE ULTIMATE MEANING OF LIFE.
AT ANY RATE, THIS IS WHERE I CAME IN. I STUMBLED ACROSS SUZY WHILE MAKING MY ROUNDS THAT DAY. THE ENCOUNTER PROVED FATEFUL TO BOTH OUR LIVES.
I KIND OF GOT THE FEELING SHE WAS TRYING TO, LIKE...
...TELL ME SOMETHING.
LIFE IS
'COURSE AT THE TIME I THOUGHT SHE WAS JUST ANOTHER BIRD. ONLY LEARNED DIFFERENT WHEN THE FEDS SHOWED UP.
THEY SAID SHE WAS A NATIONAL TREASURE.
THEY QUESTIONED ME FOR DAYS. I KEPT TELLING THEM...
...IF I'D KNOWN JUST HOW SPECIAL SUZY WAS...
...I NEVER WOULD'VE EATEN HER.
End

The Flaming Carrot in

Mystery of the Flying Fish

by Bob Burden

One day Flaming Carrot was in his house. He was in his bedroom. The TV was on. He was counting the pockets on his clothes. Some shirts had two pockets, some had one. Most pants had four pockets, but don't forget about the blue jeans, they have the little extra change pockets on the right hand side. But only some blue jeans had that. Not all. This was a Zen exercise, this inventory of his pockets. He had thought of it that morning and decided to do it to clear his mind after watching some troubling talk shows.

Suddenly a scream came from the streets. Look outside! A young girl is in trouble. She's being chased by a flying fish! The fish swims through air like it should swim through water.

"Holy Toledo!" said Flaming Carrot, leaping out through the window screen, "I am to the rescue."

Quickly he shot the fish and it fell to the ground flipping around. The girl was very thankful. "My hero," she said.

But the trouble was not over.

The flying fish were everywhere. Schools of them approached from the western sky. They were flying in windows of buildings and in cars, chasing people down hallways, hitting grown men on the butt. Everywhere across the city the attack continued. Where did they come from? Some scientific experiment gone wrong? Some nuclear waste accident? Some ancient spell? Or maybe fish always could fly, but didn't know it until today.

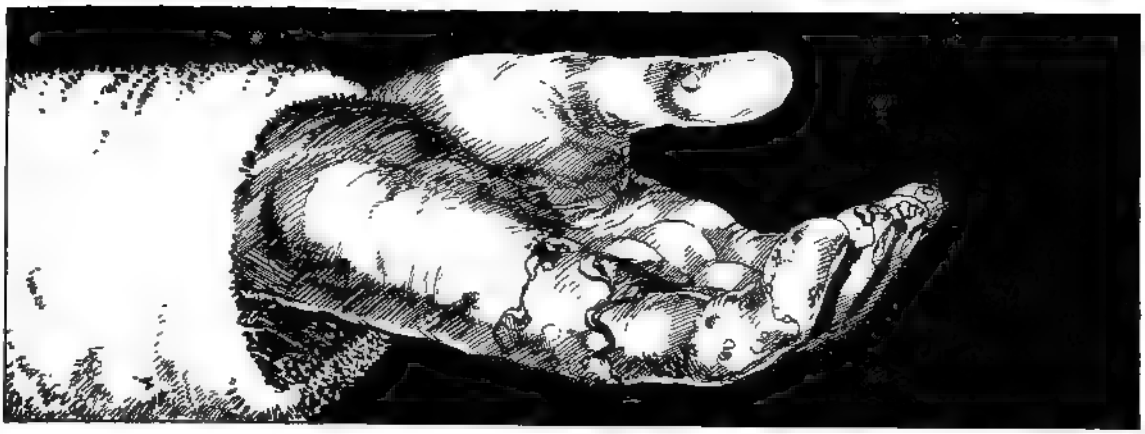
"Who cares," said Flaming Carrot, "I'll blow them all away." Flaming Carrot stood there with both barrels blazing.

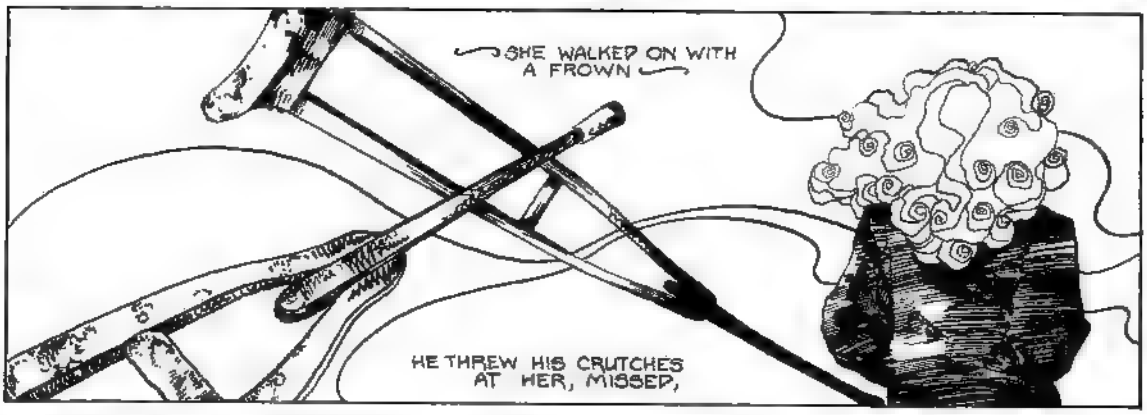
The fish fell like rain.

Bravely he stood in the middle of the street. And then others joined in. Policemen, ordinary citizens with hunting rifles, hoes and shovels, little kids with sling shots all rushed to the streets to defend their city. Soon all the fish were dead, and everyone wondered where the fish had come from.

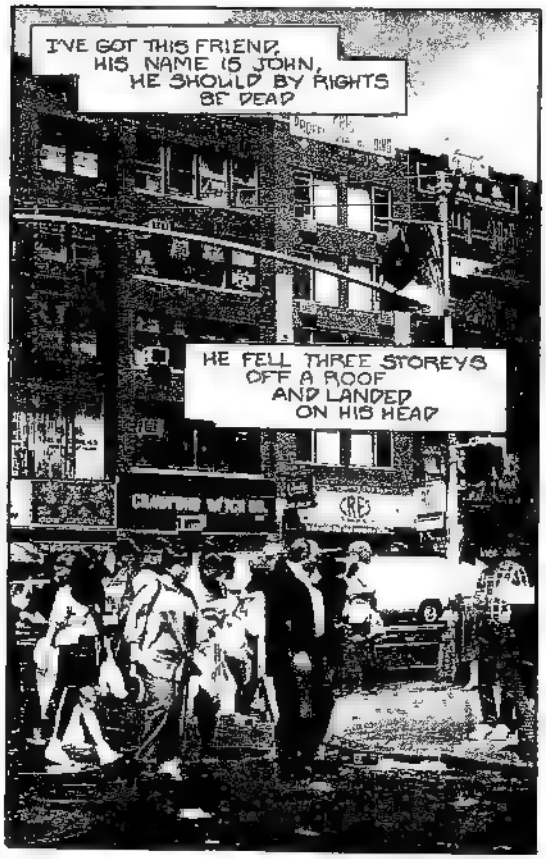
It was on the news that night and people talked about it for days afterwards. Flaming Carrot just went back to his room and to counting his pockets.

FIRES I WISH I'D SEEN
©1974 Alan Moore Eclipse Dave
LAST WEEK THAT PLACE BURNED THAT SOLD THOSE PSYCHEDELIC SHIRTS — IT MUST HAVE LOOKED SO COLORFUL, AND NOBODY WAS HURT!
A PAISLEY BLAZE WHOSE ORIGINS NOBODY COULD ASSERT —
BUT THAT'S ONE FIRE I WISH I'D SEEN.
THAT OLD GUY WITH A STAMMER YOU SEE SHUTTLING THROUGH TOWN —
HE ASKED THIS GIRL FOR CIGARETTES,




SHE WALKED ON WITH A FROWN
HE THREW HIS CRUTCHES AT HER, MISSED,

LOOKED BITTER AND FELL DOWN
IT'S THE MOST ELOQUENT HE HAS EVER BEEN.


I'VE GOT THIS FRIEND, HIS NAME IS JOHN, HE SHOULD BY RIGHTS BE DEAD
HE FELL THREE STOREYS OFF A ROOF AND LANDED ON HIS HEAD

HIS SKULL REMAINED INTACT, BUT CRACKED THE PAVING STONES INSTEAD.
HEAVEN MUST BE FULL: THEY'RE TURNING FOLK AWAY SIGHT UNSEEN.
AND WHAT I WISH FOR YOU TO HAVE IS A WARM NIGHT IN JULY WHEN THE SODIUM LIGHT'S LIKE LUCOZADE GOT SPILLED ACROSS THE SKY
AND FROM HARD-EYED ITALIAN WAITERS TO THE SKATE PUNKS ROLLING BY
EVERYBODY TREATS YOU LIKE A QUEEN.

okay. so i'm just hanging out on the net, looking for anything interesting in the ol' cyberspace. it beats homework.

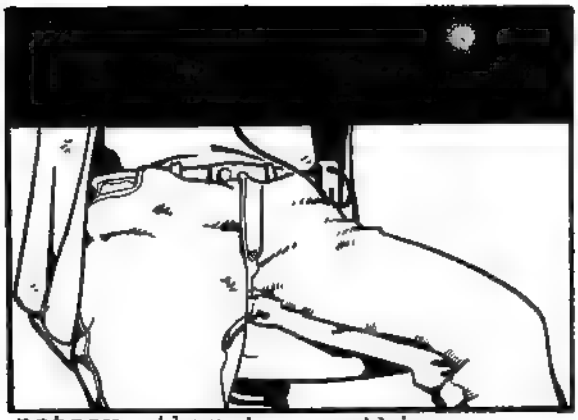
of course, nobody who hangs in cyberspace calls it that. i mean, how can anybody take a prefix like "cyber-" seriously?

cyberanything is only good for magazine articles about some exaggerated cyberculture and self-proclaimed cyberpunks who actually think words like "meatware" are just too kewl.

anyway, so i'm just hanging out, looking to see what's up, except nothing much happens on a friday night during prime time t.v.

i mean, you'd think there'd be at least one interesting person worth talking to on the net, even on a friday night.

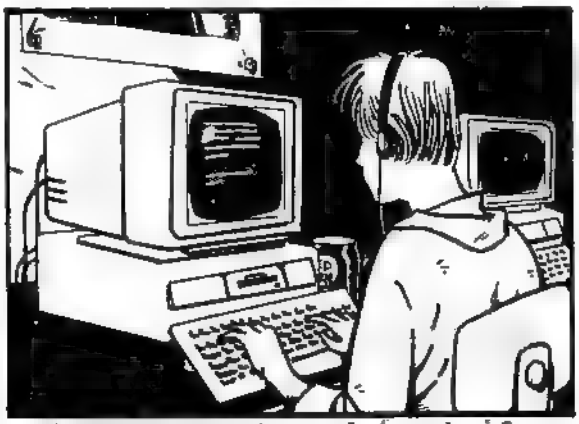
instead, friday evenings find mostly idlers sitting around and wasting net resources when they can be, i dunno, having netsex or something.



netsex. there's something interesting. you don't know how big a loser you can be until you've tried it.

and then the screen flashes with proper caps.

"Hey. Kinda quiet here tonight," she says.



we've never met, and i ask if she's new. she isn't. she asks if i'm new. i'm not. fascinating convo so far, but not my kind of interesting.

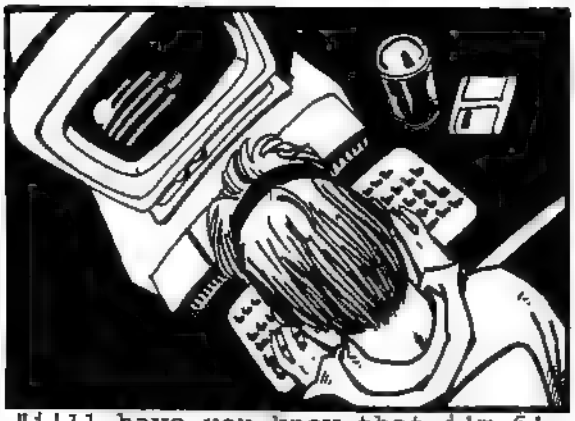
"What are you doing?"

"i'm teaching a computer how to say 'hello, world!'"

she laughs. terrific. maybe we can trade stupid bits about bytes for the evening.

"Do you just tell jokes like a computer geek or do you look the part, too? =)"

how charming.



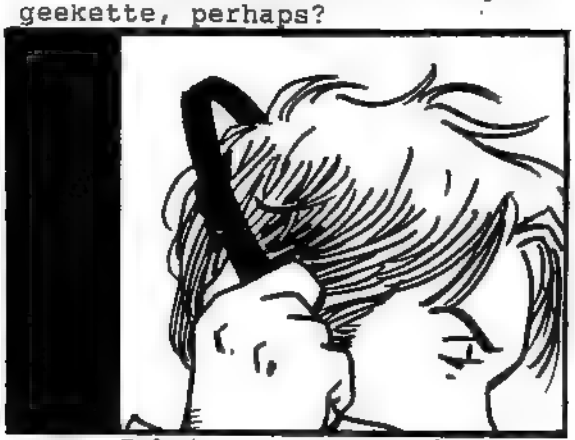
"i'll have you know that i'm 6', 180lbs, and attractively fit. i'm indiana jones, kramer, and keanu reeves rolled into one. i dig joyce, hemingway, and speeding on my harley at night."

okay, slight exaggeration. but heck, we're talking virtual reality here. doesn't hurt to give them what they want.

"I was just kidding. I'm not into surfaces."

yeah, right. "what about you? what do you look like?" computer geekette, perhaps?

"Me? Well, I'm tall, slender. Long dark hair, big green eyes, and a warm smile. I think so, anyway. =) I've often been compared to Winona Ryder and Sara Gilbert, actually."



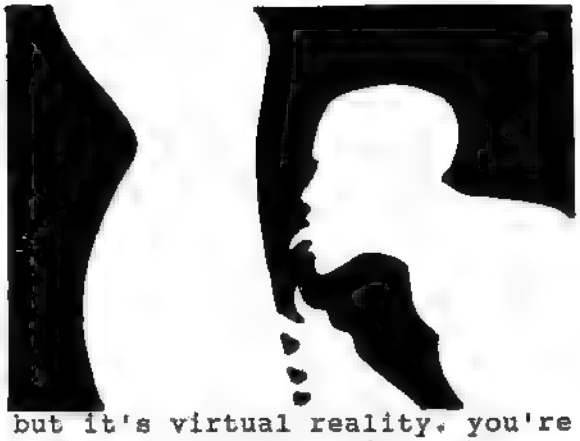
sure. "what are you wearing?"

"What am I wearing?"

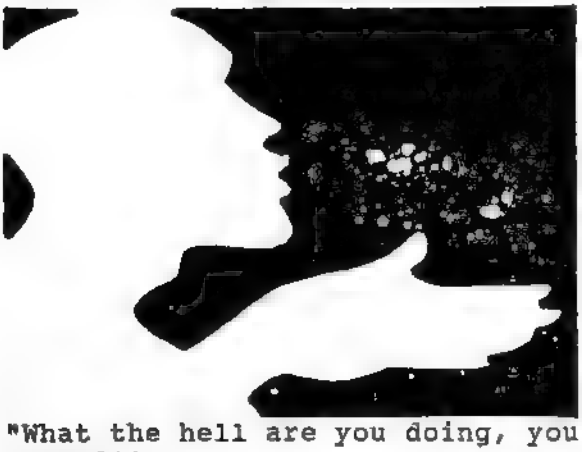
"yeah."

"A big black shirt and black jeans..."

how imaginative. bet she either knows the lyrics to all the depeche mode songs or she's got that deathly pale cure look going.



but it's virtual reality. you're suppose to pretend. i reach under her black shirt and fondle her breasts. i unbutton her black jeans with my teeth and some pretty fancy tongue action.



"What the hell are you doing, you creep?!!"

"something interesting, i hope."

she slaps me again and she disconnects.

cyberslaps don't hurt, of course. i mean, it's virtual reality. nothing cyber- can hurt you.

hell, nothing matters in cyberspace.

you just disconnect and go back to real life.

The classic teapot

CyberReal
Orbit
© 1994 Stephen Cheng
cybermail: cheng@utdallas.edu

CLASSICS DESECRATED

UPDATED BY: DOUG WHEELER and DOUG WILDEY

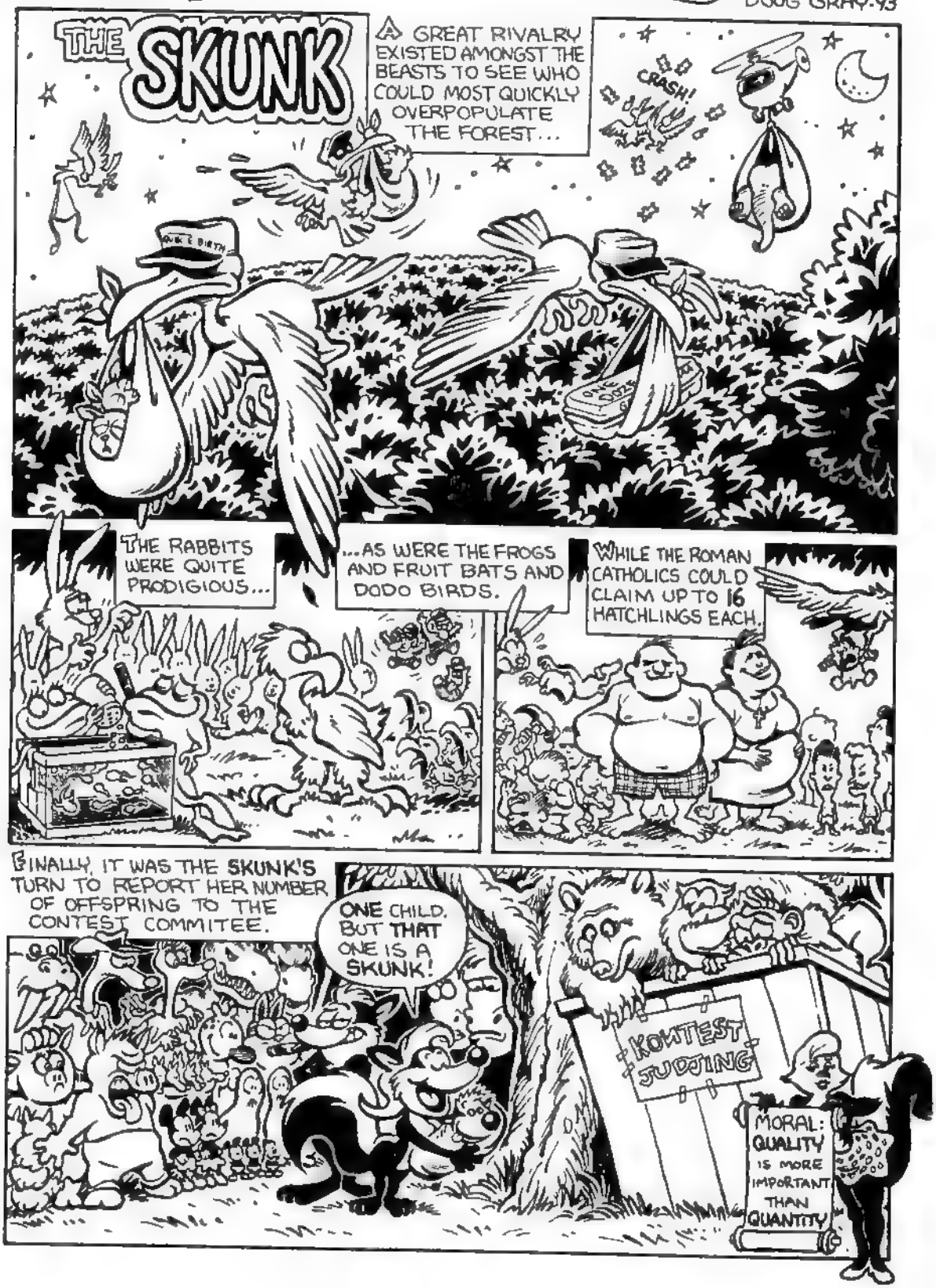
A CERTAIN DOG WHICH HAD RANDOMLY AND VICIOUSLY ATTACKED PASSERSBY WAS CAPTURED BY THE LOCAL DOG-CATCHER...
Aesop's "The Success of the Wicked"
ANIMAL SHELTER
... ONLY TO BE GIVEN A GOOD MEAL AND LET GO AT THE POUND FOR LACK OF SPACE TO HOUSE HIM.
AESOP, WHO HAPPENED BY AND OBSERVED ALL, PROTESTS:
HA HA HA HA!
DON'T LET ANY OTHER DOGS SEE YOU DO THIS, LEST THEY DEVOUR US WHEN THEY LEARN HOW GUILT IS REWARDED!
AIEEE!
GRRRRR!
AIEEEE!
MORAL: "WE'RE GOING TO THE DOGS."

CLASSICS
DESECRATED™
AESOP'S "The Organs in Revolt"
DEFILED BY DOUG WHEELER AND GREG DIGENTI
ONE DAY, THE ORGANS OF A CERTAIN MAN'S BODY GOT TOGETHER AND DECIDED THEY WERE TIRED OF SERVING THE STOMACH, WHO THEY FELT DID NOTHING...
URRP.
FFTHHP.
...THE LEGS AND FEET REFUSED TO CARRY THE STOMACH'S WEIGHT, THE HANDS TO PICK UP FOOD, THE MOUTH TO EAT, AND SO ON...
LOSE 60 POUNDS IN 50 MINUTES
GRRWL
FINALLY, THE STOMACH COULD STAND THE BOYCOTT AGAINST IT NO LONGER, AND STRUCK OUT ON ITS OWN...
SPRLLSHH
ICE CREAM!
MORAL: "DIETS DON'T INCREASE YOUR LIFE EXPECTANCY, SO WHY BOTHER?"

CLASSICS DESECRATED™

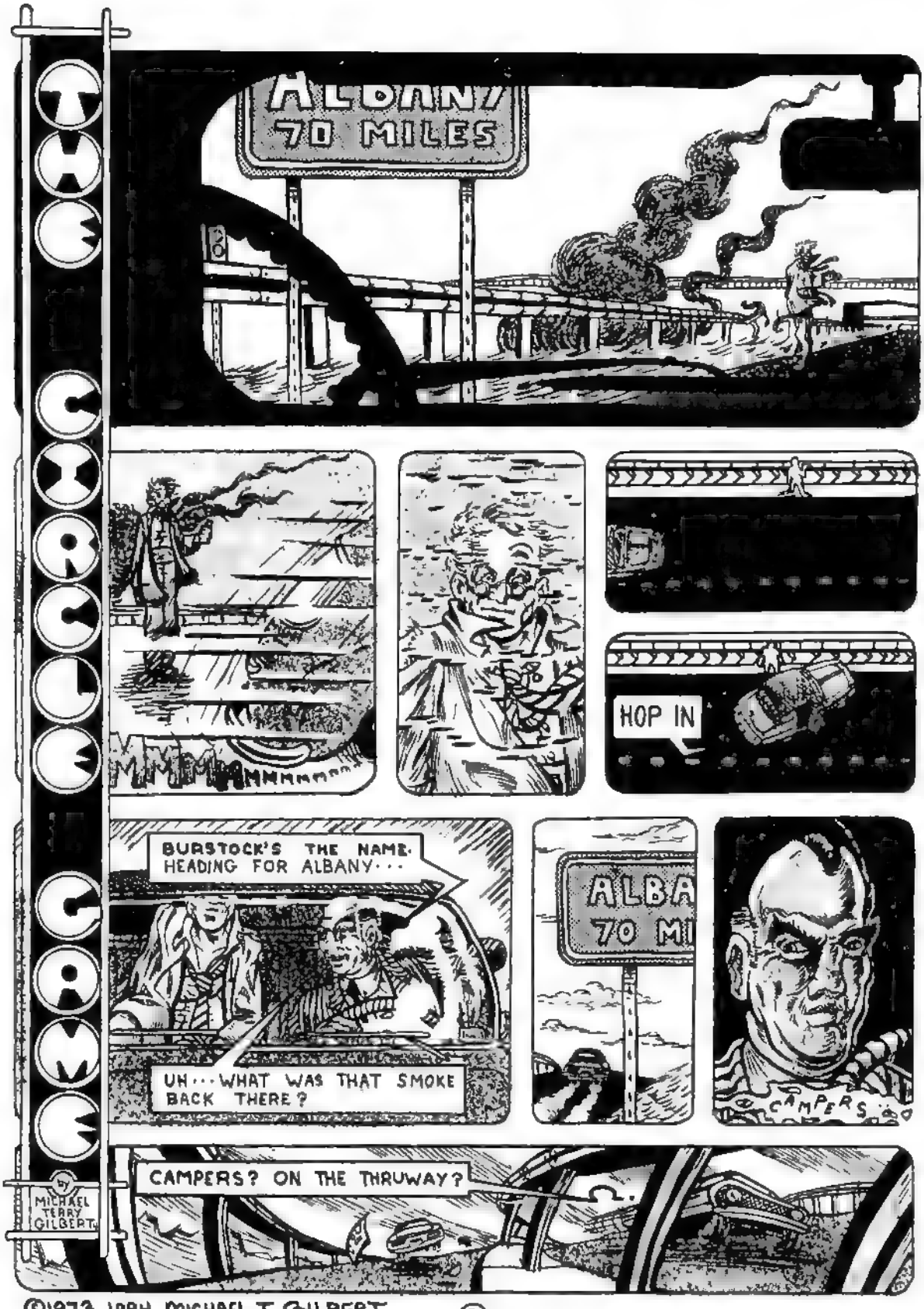
DOUG WHEELER

DOUG GRAY-93


THE SKUNK
A GREAT RIVALRY EXISTED AMONGST THE BEASTS TO SEE WHO COULD MOST QUICKLY OVERPOPULATE THE FOREST...
CRASH!
QUICK BIRTH
THE RABBITS WERE QUITE PRODIGIOUS...
...AS WERE THE FROGS AND FRUIT BATS AND DODO BIRDS.
WHILE THE ROMAN CATHOLICS COULD CLAIM UP TO 16 HATCHLINGS EACH.
FINALLY, IT WAS THE SKUNK'S TURN TO REPORT HER NUMBER OF OFFSPRING TO THE CONTEST COMMITEE.
ONE CHILD. BUT THAT ONE IS A SKUNK!
KONTEST JUDGING
MORAL: QUALITY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN QUANTITY

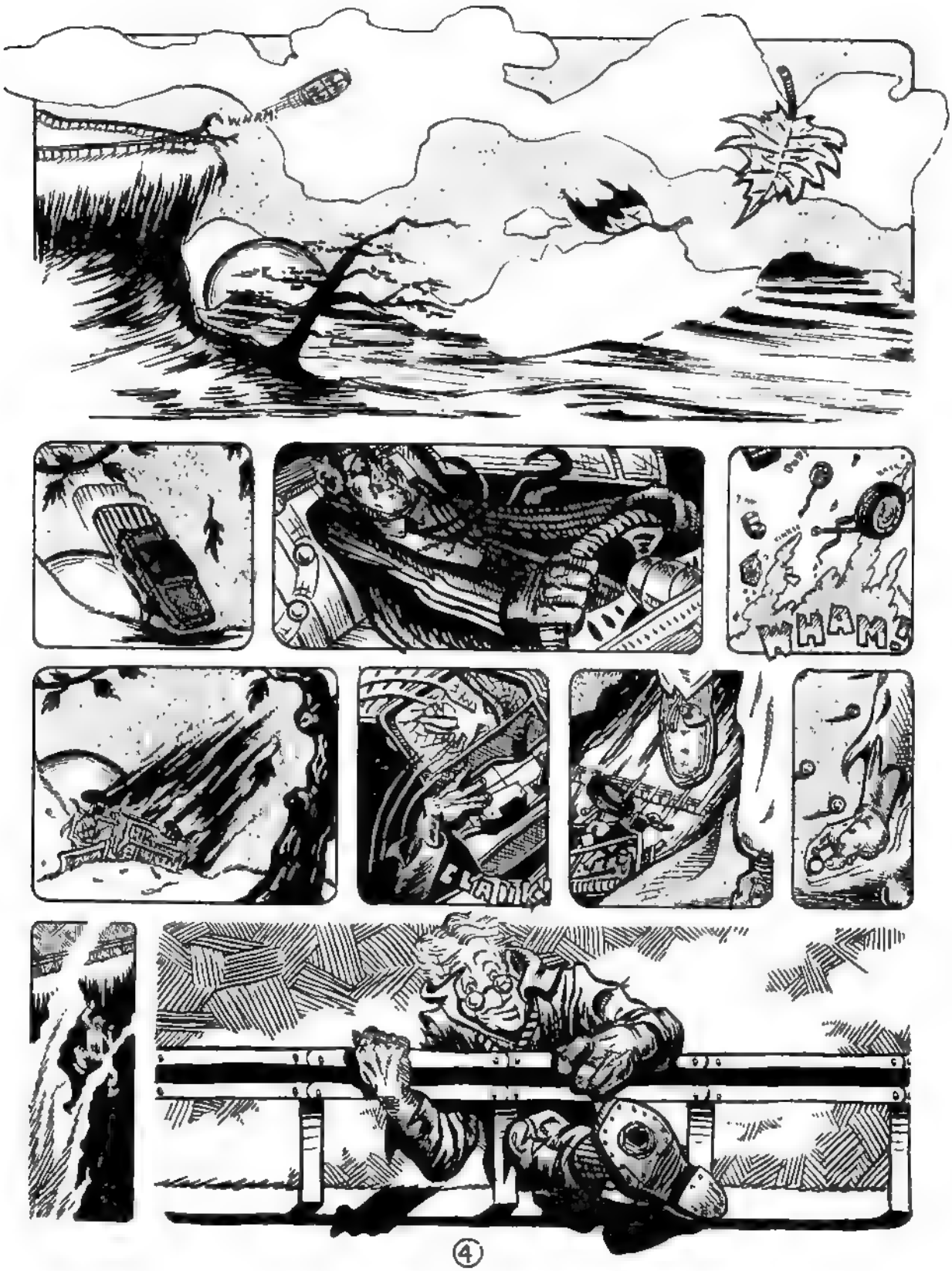
LITTLE AL WOULD SIT AND PLAY
WITH MARBLES, ALL THROUGHOUT THE DAY.
PARENTS SAID "IT'S JUST A PHASE"
"AGE WILL COME AND CHANGE HIS WAYS."
HE'LL GROW UP
AND GIVE THEM UP—

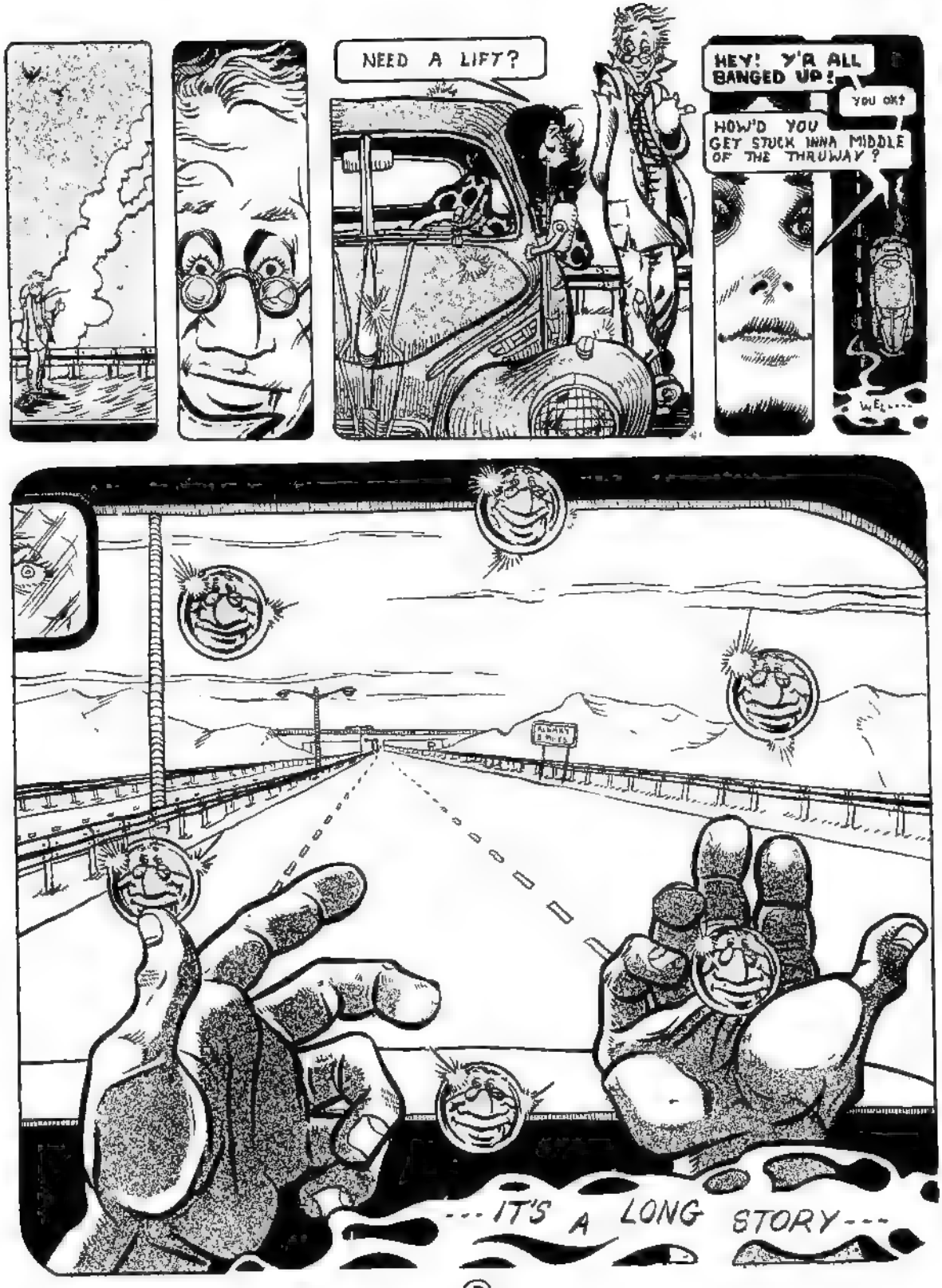
-it didn't work that way!



©1973, 1994 MICHAEL T. GILBERT

UH--- SAY, COULD YOU PUT THOSE THINGS AWAY?
THEY RE MAK NG ME NERVOUS---
KNOCK IT OFF, WILL YA'!?!
GIMME THOSE GODDAMN THINGS!
EEEE


WHAM!
WHAM!
CLANK!


NEED A LIFT?
HEY! Y'R ALL BANGED UP!
YOU OK?
HOW'D YOU GET STUCK INNA MIDDLE OF THE THRUWAY?
WELL....
---IT'S A LONG STORY---

-THE END-

new sub mis sions guide lines

Okay, I get asked enough about the guidelines for submissions to NEGATIVE BURN so I guess it's about time I just sit down at my computer terminal and type up what requirements I have. First of all, I am booked up for about a year and a half to two years on NEGATIVE BURN. That's right, you read correctly. I have through issue no. 25 (July 1995) scheduled and still have plenty of stories left in inventory. That's not to say I won't take a submission, it just has to be really good and original to catch my attention. If after reading the above couple of sentences you still think you have something that's going to have me begging for your permission to print your story in NEGATIVE BURN then let's get to the nitty-gritty.

From this point forth, I WILL NOT reply to a submission that does not include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. I've always prided myself that I will take the time to answer each and every submission I receive with a personal reply, even when I've had to pay for the envelopes and stamps to do so. No more. I simply have way too many submissions to sort through and read that I will no longer foot the bill. So, please, if you expect a reply from me, enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND FULL SCRIPTS for me to read, unless I've personally asked for you to do so. I DO NOT match up writers and artists. I simply don't have the time. If you're a writer and you want to submit a story to me, I suggest that you first find a TALENTED artist. What I mean by "talented" is I expect the artist to be of professional quality. Be honest and look at the artist's work and ask yourself, "would I publish his/her work and expect to make any money from it?" If you're honest with yourself then you'll learn to increase your standards. When you find your talented artist have him/her draw a couple of pages of sequential art (not pin-ups, but panel to panel artwork)—I have to see if the artist can tell a story. This is true for ANY proposal you ever do. Editors and publishers don't want to see pin-up pages, they want to see the story. If you have your artist and your story then you have two choices to make before you submit to NEGATIVE BURN. You can either go ahead and finish the story and submit your proposal as a finished piece (this gets the quickest reaction) or you send the sample art pages with a one-two page plot of the proposed short story—NO FULL SCRIPTS. If you send a full script then it may take me months to get to it. I always put scripts at the bottom of the submissions pile to "read later." If I like the story and the art then I'll get in touch with you and tell you to send me a full script to look over.

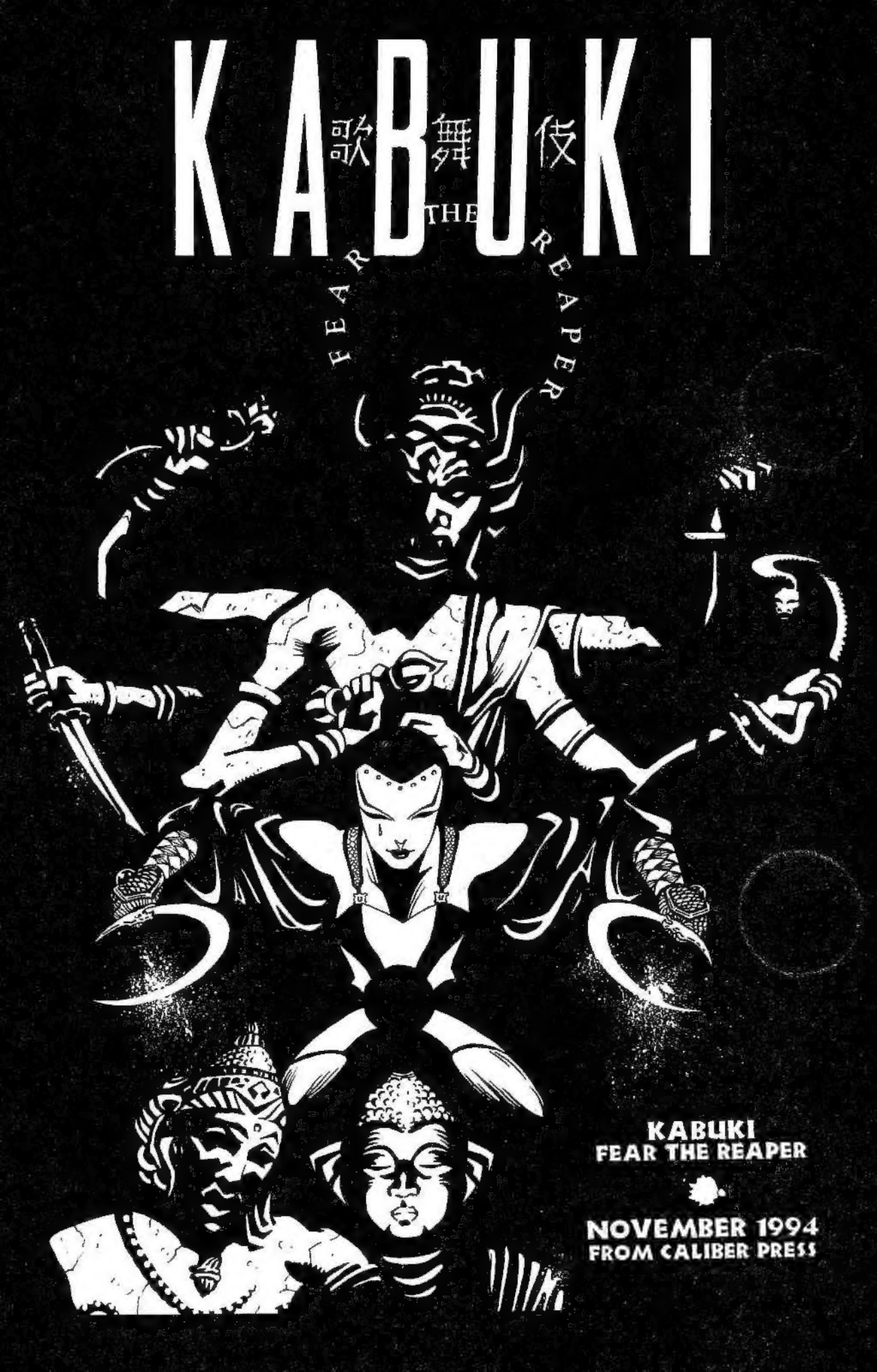
If you are an artist and you send me art samples without a story synopsis along with it then don't expect a reply—that's not to mean I won't reply to you, just don't expect it. As I said, I don't match up artists and writers. I will keep art samples sent to me on file for future reference in the event that I need an artist for some project or if a writer or editor friend of mine needs an artist for a particular story or series, I'll go through my files and see if I can find someone that would suit their needs.

Also, don't send me proposals for a mini-series of an ongoing series. I edit an anthology comic book which means I use short stories, nothing else. You'd be surprised how many ongoing series proposals I get. If you have a mini-series or ongoing series proposal don't send it to me, send it to Caliber Press. I am not an employee of Caliber Press. I am a freelance editor and writer. Caliber Press' address is: Submissions Editor, 11904 Farmington Rd, Livonia, MI 48150.

Remember that when you submit something to NEGATIVE BURN that I don't like submissions. I'd rather do just about anything else than review submissions, but it's part of being an editor. It's your job to make me like your story, so make sure that it is really, really good. Good submissions I will find a place for, bad ones I won't. Only about 1 out of 20 (if that many) unsolicited submissions I get are accepted, and that number is going to greatly reduce as I already have too much inventory. Most of the stuff you see in NEGATIVE BURN are creators that I've asked to be in the pages, probably as much as 90% of the material. The chances of me accepting many unsolicited submissions are pretty slim, so be critical of your work and be honest with yourself before deciding to send a proposal out. I'm not trying to crush your dreams and I'm not trying to be harsh. I'm just being honest. This is a tough market, getting tougher by the minute. Good luck.

Joe Pruett

Editor


KABUKI
歌舞伎
THE
FEAR THE REAPER
KABUKI
FEAR THE REAPER
NOVEMBER 1994
FROM CALIBER PRESS

Link W. Herrman
via CompuServe

I particularly enjoyed Gaiman's WE CAN GET IT FOR YOU WHOLESALE. I would have never thought Armageddon would be triggered by a jealous office worker.

MR. MAMOULIAN and CLASSICS DESECRATED were both their usual charming selves.

THE HUNGRY ONES was a "nice" little tale of prejudice and exposed the separation that Apartheid engendered in race/colour and services. Very effective.

ANATOMY LESSON and ALAN MOORE'S SONGBOOK are both well done pieces. Alan's songs would probably work better along with music, but they are still quite effective with the illustrations.

It's taking me a while to warm up to TWILIGHT PEOPLE. I think the main reason it's not to my particular tastes.

Glad you enjoyed most everything in the issue, Link. Also, nice to see you on CompuServe—makes it easier for me to receive letters of comment from you. Anyone out there who has access to CompuServe I'd love to hear from you so take advantage of it. My CompuServe address is on the inside front cover of every issue.

Funny that you should mention that Alan's songs would probably work better with music. As a matter of fact, Alan has been recording each song that will be published in NEGATIVE BURN and a CD is in the works.

NEW ADDRESS!!

NEW, I tell ya, NEW!

Joe Pruett
P.O. Box 893
Acworth, GA
30101

Ross Peterson
18442 California Ave.
Homewood, IL 60430

Sir,

Just picked up NEGATIVE BURN #10 at the Chicago Comic Con. Very impressive. Nice work by Vansant, Bolland, and Moore. Especially excellent art by Bil Ruth in the "The Art Spectrum."

This is the first time I've read the Caliber Press product. Don't recall seeing it in the comic stores. Have been reading comics since 1960 and it's great to see major talent telling stories that don't rely on steroid freaks slamming into each other.

Enclosed is a check for $18 for a six-issue subscription.

This is the kind of reaction I just love to see. Thanks for the subscription, Ross. I know you won't be disappointed.

SPECIAL NOTE FROM TERRY MOORE

For several months now, all the pages to STRANGERS IN PARADISE #3, including the cover painting and Elizabeth Watasin's back-up story, have been missing. It's not certain whether they were stolen or lost in the mail when being returned to me by Antarctic Press. The bottom line is they are not to be found and I need your help. If anybody spots any of the original artwork from this book out there, please notify me, or, if at a con, the organizers of the con. I have not sold any of the art for SIP, so if you see a page you know it's hot.

There will be a reward for anyone helping me retrieve these pages. Thanks!

Terry Moore
P.O. Box 271487
Houston, TX 77277-1487

Margaret M. Szvetecz
505 W. Healey #2
Champaign, IL 61820

HELP! Since I've started reading NEGATIVE BURN, I have been pre-ordering it at my local comic shop using PREVIEWS. I just realized (when I pre-ordered NEGATIVE BURN #14) that I had neglected to order NEGATIVE BURN #12 and #13. If possible, I would like to order these two issues directly from Caliber Press.

I originally started reading NEGATIVE BURN because of the Alan Moore songs. However, I have been enjoying the other pieces and I plan to continue getting issues. I'm also looking forward to reading further installments of LOST LAUGHTER, which I have been following in the self-published form.

Consider #12 and #13 on the way, Margaret. Also, I realize that I recently said that LOST LAUGHTER would start in NEGATIVE BURN #14, but, actually, I made a mistake and it will start in #15. Sorry. I've gotten all four installments in and Jeff's done a wonderful job finishing it all off. You won't be disappointed.

Olav Beemer
Brugakker 36-06
3704 LP Zeist
The Netherlands
Europe

Dear Joe,

Great cover on NEGATIVE BURN #11, guys! I've been a long-time admirer of Moebius' brilliant artwork, especially his BLUEBERRY work, which is very popular here in Europe. Therefore, you can imagine my surprise when I found one of his striking visuals gracing the cover on one of my favorite anthology books currently residing on the shelves in the comics stores.

WE CAN GET THEM WHOLESALE was one of the best features in this very issue. What a way to open a book, eh? While reading the story, I indeed could feel this originally was a Gaiman tale, as the concept of one man willing to kill off the whole world just because he saw two colleagues entering the dark room together only could've been brought up by a mind as ingenious as Gaiman's. Yet, I must compliment Joe Pruett on how he handled this adaptation. Overall a wonderful job, also as far as the artwork is concerned.

THE HUNGRY ONES being the second adaptation story in this issue, coincidentally also was the other story which I would rate among the best ever presented in NEGATIVE BURN. As I'm completely unfamiliar with the work of Martha Henry, I can't really judge how well Malcolm Bourne has handled it, but I can say that I've enjoyed it a great deal, from the beginning to the end. The artwork complemented the tale well. I've noticed this kind of art always meshes well with Malcolm's work, as the same thing was the case on TALES OF ORDINARY MADNESS with Mike Allred. My compliments on this one, too.

NEGATIVE BURN has matured over the last year, its first year of existence. I can safely say, although I have sorely missed out on issue #8 of this series, it has lived up to all of my highest expectations and sometimes even past that point. Thanks for a considerably well done job, thus far.

You missed out on issue eight! Shame, Olav! Well, in case anyone doesn't know, you can order any back issue of NEGATIVE BURN at cover price directly from Caliber Press or from me. Now nobody should have an excuse for ever missing an issue.

UNDER